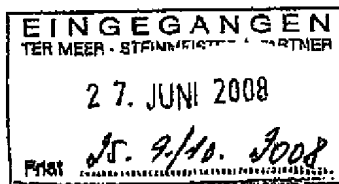




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Date
28-08-2008

Reference OPP-AZ-2006-002	Application No./Patent No. 06022437.5 - 2314 / 1746196
Applicant/Proprietor LG ELECTRONICS INC.	

Communication pursuant to Article 94(3) EPC

The examination of the above identified application has revealed that it does not meet the requirements of the European Patent Convention for the reasons already stated in the European search opinion. If the deficiencies indicated are not rectified the application may be refused pursuant to Article 97(2) EPO.

You are invited to file your observations and insofar as the deficiencies are such as to be rectifiable, to correct the indicated deficiencies within a period

of four months

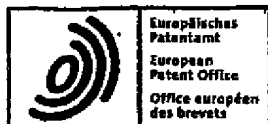
from the notification of this communication, this period being computed in accordance with Rules 126(2) and 131(2) and (4) EPC.

One set of amendments to the description, claims and drawings is to be filed within the said period on separate sheets (R. 50(1) EPC).

Failure to comply with this invitation in due time will result in the application being deemed to be withdrawn (Art. 94(4) EPC).

Primary Examiner
for the Examining Division

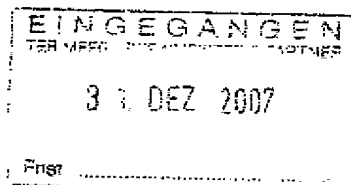




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Date
02.01.08

Reference OPP-AZ-2006-002	Application No./Patent No. 06022437.5 - 2314
Applicant/Proprietor LG ELECTRONICS INC.	

Communication

The extended European search report is enclosed.

The extended European search report includes, pursuant to Rule 62 EPC, the European search report (R. 61 EPC) or the partial European search report/ declaration of no search (R. 63 EPC) and the European search opinion.

Copies of documents cited in the European search report are attached.

☒ 2 additional set(s) of copies of such documents is (are) enclosed as well.

The following have been approved:

☒ Abstract ☒ Title

☐ The Abstract was modified and the definitive text is attached to this communication.

The following figure will be published together with the abstract: 3

Refund of the search fee

If applicable under Article 9 Rules relating to fees, a separate communication from the Receiving Section on the refund of the search fee will be sent later.





DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2003, no. 05, 12 May 2003 (2003-05-12) -& JP 2003 019382 A (MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC CORP), 21 January 2003 (2003-01-21) * abstract *	1-26	INV. D06F39/08 D06F35/00 D06F39/04
A	GB 1 222 227 A (POENSGEN) 10 February 1971 (1971-02-10) * the whole document *	1-26	
A	GB 2 348 213 A (NORTH JOHN HERBERT) 27 September 2000 (2000-09-27) * the whole document *	1-26	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 016, no. 449 (C-0986), 18 September 1992 (1992-09-18) -& JP 04 158896 A (SANYO ELECTRIC CO LTD), 1 June 1992 (1992-06-01) * abstract *	1-26	
A	GB 799 788 A (ERICH SULZMANN) 13 August 1958 (1958-08-13) * the whole document *	1-26	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC) D06F
A		5-12, 15	
A	DE 44 31 654 A (MIELE & CIE) 7 March 1996 (1996-03-07) * the whole document *	1-26	
X	GB 21286 A A.D. 1897 (JENKINS CHARLES DUNSFORD [US]) 6 August 1898 (1898-08-06) * the whole document *	1-26	
X	EP 0 816 550 A (ESSWEIN SA [FR]) 7 January 1998 (1998-01-07) * the whole document *	1-26	
		-/--	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 6 December 2007	Examiner Spitzer, Bettina
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons * : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	WO 03/012185 A (NORTH JOHN HERBERT [GB]) 13 February 2003 (2003-02-13) * the whole document *	1-26	
A	GB 835 250 A (JAMES ARMSTRONG & CO LTD) 18 May 1960 (1960-05-18) * the whole document *	1-26	
A	US 3 712 089 A (TOTH A) 23 January 1973 (1973-01-23) * the whole document *	1-26	
A	GB 2 113 722 A (SENKINGWERK GMBH KG) 10 August 1983 (1983-08-10) * the whole document *	1-26	
X	WO 97/15709 A (PEETERS TOM WALTER HELENA MARI [BE]) 1 May 1997 (1997-05-01) * the whole document *	1-26	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 6 December 2007	Examiner Spitzer, Bettina
<div>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</div> <div>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</div> <div>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</div>			

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EPO FORM 1503 03.02 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 06 02 2437

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

06-12-2007

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
JP 2003019382 A	21-01-2003	NONE	
GB 1222227 A	10-02-1971	BE 724654 A CH 482051 A FR 1591107 A NL 6814208 A	02-05-1969 30-11-1969 27-04-1970 15-01-1970
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US 3712089 A	23-01-1973	NONE	
GB 2113722 A	10-08-1983	CH 643900 A5 DE 2927874 A1 FR 2461053 A1 GB 2053287 A JP 1023158 B JP 1540017 C JP 56015793 A US 4494265 A US 4422309 A	29-06-1984 05-02-1981 30-01-1981 04-02-1981 01-05-1989 31-01-1990 16-02-1981 22-01-1985 27-12-1983
WO 9715709 A	01-05-1997	AU 7270996 A BE 1009718 A6	15-05-1997 01-07-1997

The following documents are referred to in this communication; the numbering will be adhered to in the rest of the procedure:

- D1: PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2003, no. 05, 12 May 2003 (2003-05-12)
-& JP 2003 019382 A (MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC CORP), 21 January 2003
(2003-01-21)
- D2: GB-A-1 222 227 (POENSGEN) 10 February 1971 (1971-02-10)
- D3: GB-A-2 348 213 (NORTH JOHN HERBERT) 27 September 2000 (2000-09-27)
- D4: PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 016, no. 449 (C-0986), 18 September
1992 (1992-09-18) -& JP 04 158896 A (SANYO ELECTRIC CO LTD), 1 June
1992 (1992-06-01)
- D5: GB 799 788 A (ERICH SULZMANN) 13 August 1958 (1958-08-13)
- D6: DE 44 31 654 A (MIELE & CIE) 7 March 1996 (1996-03-07)
- D7: GB 21286 A A.D. 1897 (JENKINS CHARLES DUNSFORD [US]) 6 August 1898
(1898-08-06)
- D8: EP-A-0 816 550 (ESSWEIN SA [FR]) 7 January 1998 (1998-01-07)
- D9: WO 03/012185 A (NORTH JOHN HERBERT [GB]) 13 February 2003 (2003-02-
13)
- D10: GB 835 250 A (JAMES ARMSTRONG & CO LTD) 18 May 1960 (1960-05-
18)
- D11: US-A-3 712 089 (TOTH A) 23 January 1973 (1973-01-23)
- D12: GB-A-2 113 722 (SENKINGWERK GMBH KG) 10 August 1983 (1983-08-
10)
- D13: WO 97/15709 A (PEETERS TOM WALTER HELENA MARI [BE]) 1 May
1997 (1997-05-01)

1. Art. 84 EPC

- 1.1 Claims 1 and 20 have been drafted as separate independent claims. However, they appear to relate effectively to the same subject-matter and to differ from each other only with regard to the definition of the subject-matter for which protection is sought and/or in respect of the terminology used for the features of that subject-matter. The aforementioned claims therefore lack conciseness. Moreover, lack of clarity of the claims as a whole arises, since the plurality of independent claims makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the matter for which protection is sought, and places an undue burden on others seeking to establish the extent of the protection. Hence, claims 1 and 20 do not meet the requirements of Article 84 EPC in combination with Rule 43(2) EPC.

The applicant is requested to file an amended set of claims which complies with Art. 84 EPC and Rule 43(2). Particular embodiments of the invention have to be drafted in dependent claims (see also Rule 43(3) EPC). Failure to do so, or to submit convincing arguments as to why the current set of claims does in fact comply with these provisions, will lead to refusal of the application under Article 97(2) EPC.

- 1.2 Claims 1 and 20 are not clear as the word "in" ("a washing method in a steam injection type washing machine") leaves the reader in doubt whether the protection sought is limited to the method per se, or whether the washing machine, too, is to be protected. For the sake of clarity, claims of this kind should be directed e.g. to "a washing method using a steam injection type washing machine" (see Guidelines C-III 4.15).
- 1.3 The vague and imprecise statement in the description on page 21, last paragraph and p. 22 implies that the subject-matter for which protection is sought may be different to that defined by the claims, thereby resulting in lack of clarity of the claims (Article 84 EPC) when used to interpret them (see the Guidelines, C-III, 4.4). This statement should therefore be amended to remove this inconsistency.
2. Claim 1 - Art. 54(1) and (2) EPC
The document D13 discloses (the references in parentheses applying to this document):
"A washing method in a steam injection type washing machine (p. 1, l. 6, l. 17), comprising:
a water supplying step for supplying wash water into a wash tub (p. 5, l. 3-4);
a steam generating step for supplying steam into the wash tub by operation of a steam supply unit (p. 5, l. 26-29); and
a circulating step for circulating wash water of the wash tub into the wash tub (p. 5, l. 31-34)."
The subject-matter of claim 1 is therefore not new (Article 54(1) and (2) EPC).
Also documents D7, D8, D9 discloses substantially the same subject-matter and therefore, are also novelty destroying.
3. Claim 20 - Art. 54(1) and (2) EPC
The objection under item 2 also holds for claim 20 (see also item 1.1).

4. **Dependent Claims 2-19, 21-26**
Dependent claims 2-19, 21-26 do not appear to contain any additional features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the EPC with respect to novelty and inventive step, because they are either known from documents D1-D13 or a normal design option.
5. To meet the requirements of Rule 42(1)(b) EPC, the document D13 should be identified in the description and the relevant background art disclosed therein should be briefly discussed.
6. Independent claims 1 and 14 are not in the two-part form in accordance with Rule 43(1) EPC, which in the present case would be appropriate, with those features known in combination from the prior art (document D13) being placed in the preamble (Rule 43(1)(a) EPC) and with the remaining features being included in the characterising part (Rule 43(1)(b) EPC).
7. The features of the claims should be provided with reference signs placed in parentheses to increase the intelligibility of the claims (Rule 43(7) EPC). This applies to both the preamble and characterising portion (see the Guidelines, C-III, 4.19).
8. It is not at present apparent which part of the application could serve as a basis for a new, allowable claim. Should the applicant nevertheless regard some particular matter as patentable, an independent claim should be filed taking account of Rule 43(1) EPC. The applicant should also indicate in the letter of reply the difference of the subject-matter of the new claim vis-à-vis the state of the art and the significance thereof.
9. Applications EP 04000336.0, EP0400337.8, EP 04008896.5, EP 06022438.3 from the same applicant deal with the same subject-matter. However, several patents shall not be granted to the same applicant for one invention (see Guidelines C-IV 7.4).

Bettina Spitzer.